

Message Text

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SUBJECT: LIN PIAO, WOMEN'S DAY, AND BIRTH CONTROL

SUMMARY

THE PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL ON WOMEN'S DAY BARELY MENTIONS PLANNED PARENTHOOD THIS YEAR. ON THE OTHER HAND, A KWANGTUNG CONFERENCE ON BIRTH CONTROL WAS TOLD THAT THIS WAS "AN INTEGRAL PART" OF MAO'S REVOLUTIONARY LINE, AND IT CALLED ON LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS TO "SETTLE ACCOUNTS FOR THE CRIMES OF LIN PIAO AND THE LIKE IN SABOTAGING BIRTH CONTROL." THUS, THE SIGNS OF POLITICAL PUSH BEHIND BIRTH CONTROL ARE SOMEWHAT MORE AMBIGUOUS THAN A FEW MONTHS AGO. SPECIALIZED AUDIENCES ARE BEING SPURRED FORWARD BUT THE NATIONAL MEDIA AND THE MASS ORGANIZATION MOST CONCERNED SEEM MORE RETICENT THAN IN THE RECENT PAST; THEY MAY BE PREOCCUPIED BECAUSE OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE PEOPLE'S DAILY MARCH 8 EDITORIAL ON WOMEN'S DAY PLACES ITS MAJOR EMPHASIS ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE CALL FOR WOMEN TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN THE CURRENT

CRITICISM MOVEMENT IN ORDER TO OVERCOME THE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN CAUSED BY THE FALLACIES OF LIN PIAO AND CONFUCIUS. ANOTHER MAJOR AIM IS TO "LIBERATE THE FEMALE LABOR FORCE" AND "MOBILIZE WOMEN'S SOCIALIST ACTIVISM TO THE FULL" (SZECHWAN RS FEBRUARY 28). BY CONTRAST, LATE MARRIAGE AND PLANNED PARENTHOOD -- GIVEN SOME PROMINENCE LAST YEAR -- RATE ONLY A PEFFUNCTORY MENTION IN THE PD EDITORIAL AND, FOR THE MOST PART, ALSO PROVINCIAL MEDIA. THE WOMEN'S FEDERATION CIRCULARS IN INNER MONGOLIA AND HUPEH MENTION NEITHER BIRTH CONTROL NOR ITS SURROGATE CODEWORDS (RS FEBRUARY 23 AND 28, RESPECTIVELY). AT THE SAME TIME, THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE SZECHWAN WOMEN'S FEDERATION CALLS ON ITS UNITS TO "TEACH WOMEN TO FOLLOW THE PROLETARIAN VIEWPOINT IN HANDLING QUESTIONS OF LOVE, MARRIAGE, FAMILY AFFAIRS AND EDUCATION OF THEIR SONS AND DAUGHTERS, AND PROMOTE NEW STYLES" (RS FEBRUARY 28).

2. BIRTH CONTROL IS NOT, OF COURSE, BEING IGNORED. THE KWANGTUNG PROVINCIAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE RECENTLY HELD A WORK CONFERENCE ON BIRTH CONTROL. AMONG OTHER THINGS, IT HELD THAT "BIRTH CONTROL IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF CHAIRMAN MAO'S REVOLUTIONARY LINE," SAID THAT TO PUT BIRTH CONTROL "INTO PRACTICE" IS THE "NEW SOCIALIST STYLE," CRITICIZED "LIN PIAO AND HIS LIKE" FOR "SABOTAGING BIRTH CONTROL WORK," AND CALLED ON THE LEADERSHIP AT LEVELS TO "SETTLE ACCOUNTS FOR THE CRIMES" ON THIS SCORE. THUS, THE RHETORIC FOR A SPECIALIZED AUDIENCE IS STRONG, EVEN STRONGER THAN IN JANUARY WHEN FUKIEN INCLUDED BIRTH CONTROL IN THE "CRITICIZE LIN" CAMPAIGN (ER 3, HONG KONG 1465). BUT THAT LINKAGE HAS BEEN DOWNPLAYED IN THE NATIONAL MEDIA FOR THE MASS ORGANIZATION MOST CONCERNED.

3. THE CONTRAST WITH LAST YEAR'S WOMEN'S DAY EDITORIAL AND NEWS STORIES IS STRIKING, BUT IT SHOULD BE TEMPERED BY NOTING THAT THEY WERE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE FORTHCOMING ON THIS SENSITIVE ISSUE THAN THE MEDIA HAD BEEN FOR YEARS PAST. WE CONCLUDE THAT THE SIGNS OF POLITICAL PUSH BEHIND BIRTH CONTROL ARE SOMEWHAT MORE AMBIGUOUS NOW THAN THEY WERE A FEW MONTHS AGO. IT MAY BE THAT ON BIRTH CONTROL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE WOMEN'S FEDERATION, AS WELL AS THE MEDIA, IS PRE-OCCUPIED BECAUSE OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL MOVEMENT, FEELING THE NEED TO MOVE CAREFULLY AND TO PREPARE POLICY POSITIONS DEFTLY AND WELL IN ADVANCE. WITHOUT ATTEMPTING TO PREDICT THE FUTURE COURSE OF THE PROGRAM, WE WOULD NOTE THAT ORGANIZED BIRTH CONTROL ACTIVITIES SUFFERED A REAL LOSS OF MOMENTUM DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. OSBORN

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